

## NEWSLEWER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



### PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Kristi Noem has proclaimed Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019, as "Purple Heart Recognition Day," calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal.

The Purple Heart, our nation's oldest military medal, is awarded to those service men and women who have borne the battle, sacrificing life and limb.

"August 7th is a day to honor those brave men and women who have earned the Purple Heart," said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "It unites our country in recognizing the sacrifices of those who have risked everything in serving our great nation."

The Governor encourages all South Dakotans to set aside time on Aug. 7 to honor our heroes who have been honored with the Purple Heart. "It is important for

all Americans to learn the history of this important military award and the sacrifices made by the recipients," said Gov. Noem, "

"Our military remains as strong as it has ever been. America's veterans have been defined by the virtues of selfless service, sacrifice and devotion to duty," said Whitlock. "These men and women, who serve and have served, are the flesh and blood of American exceptionalism."



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## LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO STREAMLINE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR VETERANS

U.S. Sens. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Jon Tester (D-Mont.) are introducing bipartisan legislation to provide timelier education benefits to student veterans across the country.

Excessive bureaucracy at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has caused significant delays in education benefits to veterans participating in the <u>VA Work-Study Allowance Program</u>. The program allows

student veterans— whether on campus, at VA facilities or at other veteran-centered organizations— to earn money at a second job while getting an education.

Rounds and Testers' <u>G.I. Bill Work Study Improvement Act of 2019</u> streamlines the processing and administration of VA benefits through the VA Work-Study Allowance Program, providing veterans with timelier benefits.

"For years, the VA's work-study program has been a great benefit to veterans seeking to help other veterans through on-the-job training," said Rounds. "But under the current system, many students are waiting weeks to get paid for their work, and some aren't receiving paychecks at all due to administrative delays in processing at the VA. Our legislation streamlines the program to make certain student workers are getting paid on-time and in-full. Work-study programs are a great way to earn some extra cash while working



toward a degree. Our bill makes improvements to the VA's work-study program to better serve the needs of our service members transitioning into civilian life."

"Student veterans often work multiple jobs to make ends meet, and we should be making it easier, not harder, for them to access the benefits they're owed by the VA," said Tester. "Our bipartisan bill cuts down bureaucratic inefficiencies and invests in our future by getting Montana veterans better access to the benefits they need while they get an education."

Specifically, the *G.I. Bill Work Study Improvement Act* reforms the process and manner in which workstudy payments are made to participating student veterans. It also authorizes payments to schools based on their usage of work-study funds from previous semesters.

# SDNG CONTRACTING OFFICE WINS NATIONAL AWARD

For the second year in a row, the South Dakota National Guard's Purchasing and Contracting Office and 114th MSC Base Contracting Office received a National Guard Bureau 2019 Excellence in Contracting

Award for competition in contracting.

South Dakota competed against contracting offices from all 54 states and territories to receive the award, which is based on the highest competition achievement rate among vendors.

"Competition helps ensure the cost of meeting our requirement needs are fair and reasonable and provides the best value to the government,"



said Monty Eisenbraun, supervisory contract specialist for the Purchasing and Contracting Office. "Achieving the best value doesn't mean that it's always the lowest value, just that we were able to get the best product at the lowest price."

To receive this award, contracting personnel must ensure they receive multiple quotes from various vendors. This creates a challenge at times because many requirements for supplies and services are identified with little notice before the required delivery date.

A high competition achievement rate means there is fair competition among vendors to purchase quality supplies and services at the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

"Funding saved through competed actions can be used to support other unit requirements," said Eisenbraun. "This award signifies the commitment our team in South Dakota has to supporting state requirements by achieving the best value and stretching our budget dollars."

### VA RESEARCH HUB

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently established the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (AHBPCE) as part of its ongoing efforts to improve health care for veterans.

"The VA is addressing veterans concerns about the health effects of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Establishing this program through the center is a testament to that and we will continue to collaborate with outside partners to ensure its ongoing success."

The AHBPCE, located at the New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, will specialize in clinical and transitional research related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure. The new center, which formally began operations in May 2019, will initially focus on:

- Expanding understanding of health outcomes and treatments with intensive clinical research to support Veterans that may have been affected by airborne hazards and open burn pits.
- VA providers may consult with the AHBPCE about the assessment and treatment needs of veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare with airborne hazard and burn pit exposure. When appropriate, veterans may
  be invited for a comprehensive, multi-day health evaluation from a specialized team. Referral is done
  for complex clinical presentations that are unable to be diagnosed or if a development of a medical
  management plan is impossible to do locally.
- Veterans receiving VA-authorized care in the community may be referred for consultation or an examination for the same clinical reasons.
- Enhancing training and education initiatives to build and expand a network of specialized clinicians
- Analyzing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry data to monitor the VA's overall clinical response to exposure concerns

The center will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and with academic partners. For more information about AHBPCE, please visit <a href="https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/">https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/</a> WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/index.asp.

### Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

#### Is this for me?

- The registry is a database of information about Veterans and Servicemembers collected through a questionnaire.
- OEF/OIF/OND/OFS Veterans and Servicemembers who have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990 as well as those who have deployed to Afghanistan or Djibouti after September 11, 2001 can use the registry questionnaire to report exposures to airborne hazards (such as smoke from burn pits, oil-well fires, or pollution during deployment), as well as other exposures and health concerns.
- Guidance for Civilians and Contractors can be found on the FAQ page.

#### Why sign up?

- Create a snapshot from which to identify changes in your health.
- Print and use your completed questionnaire to discuss concerns with your provider.
- · Learn about follow-up care and VA benefits.
- Instructions are available if you need assistance with the questionnaire.

Get Registry Help »

### Participants: 180,728

#### Sign up in 3 easy steps

- Use your Premium DS Logon Level 2
   account to access the questionnaire. You must have a Premium DS Logon Level 2 account to participate.
- 2. Complete entire questionnaire and submit.
- Print or save completed questionnaire for your records.

Need a DS Logon? »

DS Logon Sign in »

### VA/DEEPMIND HEALTH FORM PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with <u>DeepMind Health</u>, published results in the July 31 edition of <u>Nature</u>, on the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) system that can forecast a deadly kidney disease in advance.

In keeping with VA's efforts to help improve the lives of Veterans through research and innovation, the breakthrough finding shows the model developed by the researchers can predict the presence of <u>Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)</u> in patients up to 48 hours in advance, which could help doctors determine treatment options to prevent further deterioration of the kidney.

AKI is notoriously difficult for doctors and nurses to detect; when it occurs, patients often deteriorate very quickly. The AI model permitted identification of over 90 percent of the most severe Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) cases 48 hours sooner than with usual care. That early detection permits improved medical care that can reduce progression to serious consequences such as need for dialysis.

"These are exciting times for research and innovation at VA," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Studies like this can have a significant effect in not only the veteran community, but people throughout the nation."

Moving forward, the <u>VA Palo Alto Health Care System</u> in California will be exploring ways to bring these advances into clinical use. The work leading up to this clinical trial involves complex interdisciplinary coordination to build and integrate a user-friendly platform to assist clinicians with treatment decisions. Leveraging the latest developments in AI technology is another innovation in health care that VA leadership is using to empower clinicians with timely, actionable data that improves the lives of Veterans.

For more information regarding <u>VA's Office and Research and Development</u> and AKI, visit <u>https://www.research.va.gov/topics/kidney\_disease.cfm</u>.



Applying our research for realworld impact in health, science, energy and more.

## DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY HELD FOR 152ND CSSB SOLDIERS

A deployment ceremony was held to honor about 70 Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and their families, July 27, at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre.

The unit departs for a nine-month deployment to the Middle East to provide multifunctional logistics and support operations.

Gov. Kristi Noem, Sen. John Thune, Sen. Michael Rounds, Rep. Dusty Johnson and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general, all gave remarks in support of the soldiers and their families.

"Before I served in the House of Representatives

and before I became governor, I was a mom," said Gov. Kristi Noem. "From that perspective, I am very thankful for those who give up their lives to protect me and my family."

Rep. Johnson also related his comments to family and being thankful for the sacrifices of others.

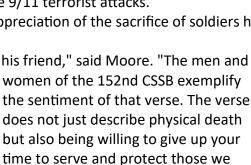
"What can you say when the sacrifice is so great that it rises above any words that might be said?" said Johnson. "So, I'll just say thank you!"

This will be the second mobilization for the 152nd CSSB since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Lt. Col. David Moore, commander of the 152nd, expressed his appreciation of the sacrifice of soldiers he will lead during the battalion's overseas mission.

"Greater love hath no man than this; that he gives up his life for his friend," said Moore. "The men and





Maj. Gen. Marlette also addressed the families of those deploying.

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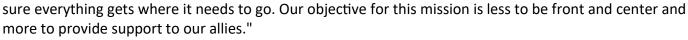
# DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY FOR 152ND CSSB SOLDIERS (CONTINUED)

"It is not just the person in uniform who does the serving," said Marlette. "Every family of every soldier here is serving this country as well."

As a part of that service, the 152nd has a unique mission in support of U.S. objectives in the Middle East.

They act as a courier of personnel, equipment and other supplies that keep armies running. Within the 152nd is the Headquarters Company, which facilitates the soldier training and administrative functions of the battalion.

"We (the 152nd) essentially operate as a UPS," said Capt. Richard Bauman, HHC commander. "We make



After the ceremony, the unit will report to Fort Hood, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.







EIGHTH ANNUAL PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION PROGRAM VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK 1021 W BAILEY ST, SIOUX FALLS SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M.

SPONSORED BY VIET NAM VETERANS CHAPTER 959, SIOUX FALLS AND CHAPTER 1054, WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA.

SEATING IS AVAILABLE.

CALL DUANE AT 605-215-2951 FOR MORE DETAILS.



Directions -

If traveling on I-229 North: Take I-229 North until it ends and turns into Jim Zweep Highway. Approximately a quarter mile north turn right onto Slip Up Creek Road. Follow Slip Up Creek Road until you see the entrance to the cemetery land.

If you're traveling on I-90: Whether traveling East or West on I-90 take the Cliff Avenue Exit (Exit 399) and head North. Travel North approximately three miles to 258<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn Right heading East on 258<sup>th</sup> St. Approximately two miles East turn right on to 477<sup>th</sup> Ave heading South. Travel South approximately one-and-a-half miles and the cemetery property will be on your right.

Good tip for the event —— please remind anyone attending to pack their lawn chairs for the groundbreaking. A limited amount of chairs will be available for the speakers and for those with mobility issues.



- Aug 2—American Legion Highway 281 Centennial Run (ND/SD Border to SD/NE Border)
- Aug 2—CRST Dedication of Veterans Memorial Park—Eagle Butte (E. HWY 212)—3:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
- Aug 4—American Legion Freedom Ride—Registration—8:30 am—10:00 am (MT) and Departure from the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—10:00 am (MT)
- Aug 14—Turner County Fair Vietnam Veterans Recognition—3:00—5:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 14—SFVAHCS Show and Shine—SFVAHCS Campus—5:30—8:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 15—Tribute to Vietnam Veterans—Maverick Air Center—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show
- Aug 24—Wine and Gala Auction (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Calico Skies Winery
- Aug 24-25—Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
- Aug 24—Vietnam Veterans State Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 26—Sioux Falls Barrel House (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit—10% all day to MWHF)—4701 E 54th Street
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair
- Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School
- Aug 31—15th Annual 727th Transportation/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings
- Sep 9—SD State Veterans Cemetery Groundbreaking—9:00 am (CT)
- Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
- Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course
- Sep 24—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)—doors open at 7:15
- Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)



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South Dakota Department of the Military <a href="http://military.sd.gov">http://military.sd.gov</a>

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